

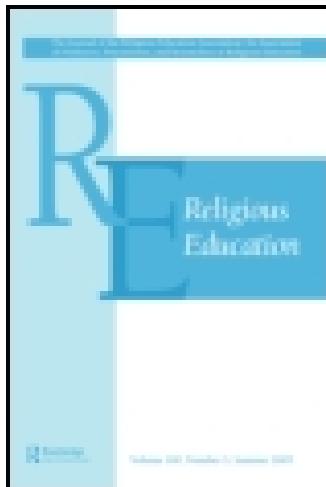
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## Yale's Institute of Human Relations\*

JAMES R. ANGELL

REQUESTS for fuller information about Yale's plans for the Institute of Human Relations are so frequent and so urgent that at the risk of needless repetition, I am asking the Editor of the *Alumni Weekly* to publish the following statement.

In its present form, the program represents a slow development covering a number of years, during which it has continually been broadened in its scope and strengthened in its underlying conceptions. I make no effort to rehearse the details of its development, but reasonably to understand the essence of the matter requires, I believe, some appreciation of the salient features of its growth. It is in no sense merely the sudden inspiration of two or three individuals. It derives ultimately from influences which have a long history and affect a wide area of human interests.

At the close of the war, thoughtful persons who had had contact with the great problems of organization and administration which were involved in the prosecution of that titanic struggle, were naturally deeply impressed with the extraordinary resources of a physical and mechanical character which had been dis-

closed as being at the disposal of mankind. But still more impressive to them was the obvious lack of any corresponding knowledge and command of the purely human resources. Despite the very best efforts of thousands of intelligent and devoted persons, the number of round pegs turning up in square holes was little short of appalling, and the blunders and confusion in consequence ensuing cost many millions of dollars and many months of needless delay.

The same wasteful difficulty had already, for a long time, been recognized in industry, and after the restoration of peace there was a fresh and aggressive effort to deal more intelligently with these problems in the light of the experience gained in the war—and this both for the sake of the workers and for that of the industries themselves. Every department of life exhibited similar mal-adjustments and called for similar thoughtful study and search for remedies. Indeed for fifty years and more the progressive industrialization of our people, the prodigious increase of our urban populations, and the growing subserviency of man to the machine in every walk of life had created a group of poignant problems for which earnest and humane souls had vainly sought a solution—generally working with little or no scientific technique and with no fundamental apprehension of the many-sided character of the issues. The courts, the social agencies, schools, hospitals—all had the same story to tell of failure to recognize and deal effectively with existing human traits in their relation to the

\*Editorial note: We are very glad to publish this article which appeared in the *Yale Alumni Weekly*. It seems to the Committee that this movement on the part of Yale University marks a very significant trend in character education. *First*, because the sciences have become altogether too mechanized, and need encouragement to go deeper because of their tremendous importance to the development of character; and *second*, because no science working alone can possibly accomplish the results that would be possible if all sciences were brought to cooperate in the task. Of course, Yale is not working alone. Other institutions in different parts of the country are approaching the problem. The Yale approach is of such importance that it promises to challenge the attention of education more than anything else which has happened in the past five years.

social order. The great war itself sprang from the breakdown of the political and social agencies designed for the controlling of international relations. In other words, the time had obviously come for some form of human engineering such as had not previously existed. How can society deal with the problem of its own organization, so that the proportion of human happiness and satisfying accomplishment may be higher, the proportion of human suffering and failure be lowered? In one form or another this question has been put insistently and with increasing frequency to our generation. That any single sufficing answer will be found is, of course, unthinkable. That no answer to any part of the question will be found is equally unthinkable, if the forces of modern science are consciously marshalled to deal with the problem at whatever points it can be attacked. Nor should it be forgotten that human engineering, like all other sound engineering, must rest upon a solid basis of pure science.

Obviously one of the primary considerations affecting the whole situation is the need for a more penetrating and usable knowledge of human nature, that is to say, a more thoroughgoing scientific psychology, a psychology which shall seek to understand the organization and the springs of human conduct, the incidence and character of psychic disease and neuro-physiological disorder, as well as the conditions of normal health; for the most superficial contacts with the social and personal maladjustments of our time reveal many of them as dependent directly, or indirectly, upon abnormal conditions of mind and body. Even the extreme proponents of an economic diagnosis and therapy for human ills are obliged to reckon with these factors. Needless to say, difficulties of this type, as well as certain possible ameliorations of them, run out at once into education, religion, business, government —to every corner of the corporate body

of human society. Obviously therefore a concurrent and equally fundamental analysis of society itself is a *sine qua non* of any sound and inclusive treatment of the problems under consideration.

At Yale in the early '20's, we began to seek means to improve our facilities and equipment, both of men and materials, to begin an attack on certain psycho-biological problems. Our first aggressive effort was directed to securing the resources for launching work in the field of psychiatry. Despite generous preliminary support for this work coming from the General Education Board, we were obliged to postpone a serious clinical beginning for reasons which I will not pause to relate. Presently, however, the Commonwealth Fund made it possible for us to undertake an extremely interesting and fruitful attack on the general problems of mental hygiene, in which we have been able to render invaluable service, not only to our immediate academic group, but also to the general New Haven community and to several nearby cities. In 1924 the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial furnished us the means to establish for a five-year experimental period a research Institute of Psychology, to which we were fortunate enough to attract several scholars of outstanding distinction. This was followed two years later by a similar generous underwriting for the promotion on a much improved scale of the clinical work carried on for many years by Dr. Gesell in the study of infantile mental and nervous development. Needless to say, there had all through this period been excellent work, both of research and teaching, going forward in many University departments whose subject matter is closely germane to the interests just named. As notable instances may be mentioned the general work in the New Haven Dispensary, in the Department of Public Health, in the Department of Pediatrics, in the School of Nursing, in the Departments of Educa-

tion and Psychology, Economics, Sociology and Government, in the Divinity School, particularly in the field of Practical Philanthropy and Education, in the Department of Industrial Engineering. Many other examples could readily be mentioned.

At about this time there began in the School of Law a very significant movement to bring much more definitely into the focus of legal studies certain problems of psychology as these affect the law, problems of economics as these are related to the whole field of trade regulation, taxation, finance, etc., and problems of government as these relate themselves to legislation, administration and the interpretations of constitutional law. This development has been accompanied by a very striking program of research into the practical procedure of the courts and into the causes and effects of business failures. In addition, researches into Connecticut problems are being carried on by the Faculty of the School of Law at the request of the judicial authorities of the State. The success already achieved by this effort to put the resources of the School at the disposal of the State, to meet its immediate and pressing requirements, has attracted wide and highly favorable attention.

It is thus easy to see that the stage was all set for undertaking a synthesis of as many as practicable of these convergent interests in a loose general organization which should render easy a fruitful contact among the men working in these neighboring fields, thus furnishing a simple and plastic mechanism whereby co-operative scientific attack could be turned on the more accessible of the urgent problems of personal and social adjustment.

Certain of the scientific forces we wished thus to employ did not exist in our Yale organization, and others that did exist were in need of a more satisfactory local habitat. Accordingly our first anxiety was to secure the resources

to command these re-enforcements of personnel and to find an appropriate home in which they, together with the men already working on our grounds in related fields, might most effectively work. It was at this point that the Rockefeller Foundation, together with the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial (since fused with the Rockefeller Foundation), supported by other related gifts from the General Education Board, made the very generous appropriations which have permitted us to begin at once the execution of our general plans. And let me make it quite clear that it is only a beginning, whose final outcome we do not pretend to foresee. This may well be very different from our present anticipations. But we are confident that we are on the right track, and that if we make mistakes, as doubtless we shall, we can turn them to good account not less for others than for ourselves. Instant and striking achievements must not be anticipated, for it will require at least a year to gather and organize the staff and to erect the new structures required to house the work, after which there must inevitably be a lapse of time before tangible results begin to accrue.

Described in the broadest terms, the object of the Institute is to provide a research and teaching center for those university divisions directly concerned with the problems of man's individual and group conduct. The purpose is to correlate knowledge and co-ordinate technique in related fields that greater progress may be made in the understanding of human life from the biological, psychological and sociological viewpoints.

Of equal importance perhaps with the immediate results which may be hoped for from research, is the effect that the Institute may be expected to have upon educational methods. It is confidently anticipated that it will tend to eradicate the arbitrary distinctions now made among various branches of science and among the several professional fields

which deal with problems of human life. Specialization has in our generation often been carried to a ridiculous extreme, in no small degree justifying the jesting definition of a specialist as a man who devotes himself to learning more and more about less and less. The time has certainly come once again to attempt a fruitful synthesis of knowledge, and especially in those fields which directly affect human welfare, and so in reality are closely connected with one another.

Obviously this program involves a number of university departments, many of which have their primary connection with the Graduate School, others with Medicine, Law, Divinity, and Engineering. To illustrate some of these relations, it may be helpful (even at the risk of repeating the substance of an earlier paragraph) to cite certain of these departments and the subjects with which they deal pertinent to the general objectives of the Institute.

Anatomy and comparative anatomy are thus concerned with organic *structure* and not least with the structure of the nervous system. Physiology, including bio-chemistry, deals with certain of the *functions* of this system, and psychology too may be so regarded, although, despite the claims of an extreme behaviorism, it is also, and primarily, concerned with the psychic sides of organic life. Pathology dealing with the facts of diseased structure and function, not less than clinical medicine in all its phases, is obviously involved, the latter more particularly in the field of diagnosis, treatment and prevention of psychic disease and in the understanding of the genetics of the prenatal and other life periods. Neurology, neuro-anatomy, neuro-physiology, and neuro-pathology, specialized sub-divisions of the preceding departments, will require to be developed much more fully than at present. Economics, sociology and government deal with various of the aspects of social life and organization (e. g. the family, industry, agriculture,

political procedure, etc.), as do education, law and divinity, the latter more particularly on the side of religious education and practical philanthropy. Personnel problems are being attacked in the Department of Industrial Engineering and in the Department of Personnel Study.

All of these Departments and Schools now in existence operating effectively according to customary standards, are in accord in their desire to co-operate in the fundamental tasks to which the Institute is to be dedicated.

Among the essentials for which funds have been provided are the following:

A building to house:

- (a) Psychology in all its branches and anthropology, including the present Institute of Psychology;
- (b) Research in Child Development;
- (c) Mental Hygiene and Psychiatry;
- (d) Research in Social Science;
- (e) A library and other facilities essential for the co-operation of the staff of the Institute with groups in other portions of the campus devoted to study and education in allied fields.

The resources have also been supplied to make a satisfactory beginning in the creation of a staff to carry forward the various research undertakings indicated in the preceding paragraphs. The University already has the nucleus of a strong staff in several of these fields, but in some of them, for example psychiatry, it will be necessary to start almost from the bottom, and in all of them there is need of supplementary appointments.

For the present the Institute will be set up with a very informal overhead organization designed to guide its general policies, control its financial arrangements and transmit to the Corporation recommendations for appointments to its staff. This organization will be composed of a committee, consisting at the

outset of the Dean of the Graduate School, the Dean of the School of Medicine, the Dean of the School of Law, the Chairman of the Department of Psychology, and the Chairman of the Department of Economics, Sociology and Government, under the general chairmanship of the President of the University. The Institute staff will comprise such members of the regular University Departments and Schools as are carrying on all, or an appreciable part, of their research in the Institute. Major appointments to the Institute will follow the present procedure, to-wit, approval by a Department prior to recommendation to the Corporation. It is anticipated that the members of the staff will hold group conferences, perhaps once a week, at which time current and future research problems will be discussed. Obviously the research program of the Institute cannot be confidently set forth in advance, for many circumstances which cannot be predicted will, from time to time, affect this. Indeed, the formulation of such a program will be no small part of the initial task of the Institute.

In the first place, there will doubtless be always more or less of the individualistic research which now is carried on by the members of existing Departments. A scholar in psychology, or sociology, for example, would not be expected to interrupt, or abandon any piece of research upon which he might have embarked, simply because he became a member of the Institute. Nor would he be coercively compelled to inaugurate research which did not appeal to him, simply because it was of interest to the staff of the Institute; although, in the nature of the case, the members of the Institute will always be working in fields which are closely related to one another. But, on the other hand, it is distinctly intended to foster from the outset co-operative research in fundamental fields affecting the fuller understanding of human behavior and social organization.

Such basic research may be carried on by scholars only temporarily attached to the staff for the purpose of carrying out some specific part of such a program, or it may, and generally will, be prosecuted entirely by permanent members of the Faculty and their assistants. An illustration may be drawn from one of the first fields which it is now planned to study—the family.

Here we have one of the oldest of human institutions which, under the conditions of contemporary life, is being subjected to great strain and from which, when badly conditioned, there seem to flow many unhappy consequences affecting the life of the members as well as the society which supports them. The juvenile courts, for example, are crowded with cases of which no adequate understanding is possible without a study of the family to which the victims belong. It is already clear that many circumstances combine to create juvenile delinquency, but among them the family ranks high. A more thorough study of this matter and a more successful technique for ascertaining the causative factors, as well as an evaluation of the remedies now prescribed by the law, is indispensable, if we are to make any social progress at this point.

Again, the most superficial study of the juvenile delinquent discloses medical, psychological and psychiatric problems which can only be dealt with by a fundamental scientific study from these sides. Here at once then we have the lawyer, the sociologist, the physician and the psychologist all involved in an issue for which the family may well be taken as the center, in that the problems concerned arise within its circle, often probably because of its inner character, and to which return the disastrous consequences of a failure to solve them in advance by appropriate preventive measures.

To this example might be added many others and the limits of this particular

study on the anthropological, the economic, and the governmental side might be extended indefinitely. We shall expect to carry them as far as is scientifically practicable. For instance, we should like to study the manner in which the dominant social agencies of our time impinge on the family, influence its operation, and are in turn influenced by it. What, for example, is the consequence for family life of the organization and operation of the great basic industries? Are there factors here which are incompatible with the development of the family? Are there rational adjustments within the family itself which can be made to meet this situation? How does the educational system fit into and affect the family? Are its effects all positive and constructive, or are there some of them negative or disintegrating? How do the compulsory education laws of the various states affect families of varying economic and social status, the rural family as well as the metropolitan family? How do the hospitalization facilities of various communities, and especially of the country-side, touch the family life of the group? Are they serving their nominal function effectively, and, if not, where and how does the system break down? This list might be extended indefinitely, but these instances may serve as illustrations of the literally unlimited range of related problems demanding solution. What remedies society chooses to attempt is for its authorized representatives to decide, although the Institute will be ready and eager to be of assistance as far as possible to reputable agencies operating in the field of practical endeavor. The great and primary need of our time, which the Institute as such is set to serve, as far as it may, is a fuller and more exact knowledge of the actual facts. This is said with full knowledge and recognition of the many admirable beginnings which have been elsewhere made in attacking these problems. But there has never, to our knowl-

edge, been any such co-operative study, as is now proposed, carried on by all the important groups of sciences and technologies which are capable of contributing to a complete understanding of the situation.

Needless to say, one of the most important consequences which we hope to achieve through the operation of the Institute is the training of men in the various specialties related to human conduct and social organization. We desire to supply them with a wider and more detailed range of understanding of the complex factors which enter into their problems than has hitherto been practicable. We would thus, for example, give to our law teachers, as well as to their students, opportunity to face and study directly the more important influences which create crime, lead to disorganized social conditions and precipitate premature or ill-advised legislation. We would similarly give our medical teachers a more vivid sense of the part played by psychological and social factors in promoting and complicating disease. In the same way, too, we would attempt a broadening of the horizon of all our specialists in the fields of study related to the understanding of human nature and social welfare — physicians, lawyers, preachers, teachers, economists, psychologists, biologists, sociologists—whoever can profit by such training. Teaching will thus be no small part of the work of the Institute, but it will be teaching keyed to the ideals and processes of organized research.

We believe that in all this we are launching a great movement which is destined not only to achieve distinguished success within the walls of Yale, but also one which is reasonably certain to exercise an enduring influence upon the procedure of all institutions of higher learning and upon the thinking of men the world around who are concerned with the knowledge and control of human nature.